

Young men's Christian associations. International  
Committee

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1922  
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# FOR THE MEN WHO ARE REBUILDING EUROPE

NUMBER TWENTY-ONE

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THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF  
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS  
*Printed in the United States of America*

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NOV 28 1922 ©CLASS 2122

no 1

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## FOREWORD

Our Army on the Rhine, the American Forces in Germany, never large, has, during recent months, been so far reduced that the little group of men stationed at Coblenz may be regarded as a symbol of American life and American ideals rather than an instrument of force. In so far as this group of Americans has exerted an influence it has been a moral influence—indeed we may truly say it belongs to the spirit. Precisely for this reason it has been of the utmost importance to maintain and enrich those finer instincts and impulses which alone qualify these men to interpret what is best in our American life to the distressed and embittered nations in whose midst they have their temporary abode.

In selecting the material for this pamphlet it has been our purpose to let the men and women who have known the soldiers best tell in their own intimate way the story of their life with the men.

C. V. HIBBARD.

347 Madison Ave., New York City.  
October 9, 1922.



## THE ARMY ON THE RHINE

Sept., 1919—June, 1922

In August, 1919, the Association began to organize a permanent service for the eight thousand United States troops then taking their positions in the German occupied territory. In October our troops originally intended for the Silesian plebiscite area were also stationed on the Rhine, making a total of sixteen thousand. Seventy-two women and fifty-four men were engaged in the work at its height, practically all these secretaries having been trained by service with the A E F.

Although in November, 1919, the welfare work for the United States army was taken over by the War Department, the Association was requested to continue in Germany and at a few other points until the army welfare service should be well established. While the work at the other points was later taken over by the army welfare board, that at Coblenz, at the request of the officers, has been left in the hands of the Association. The cooperation of the army was constant and complete. Whenever suitable quarters could be found, buildings were requisitioned for the Association. It was always notified ahead of the movements of units, that the huts might be ready when the men reached new quarters. The Association could always purchase commissary supplies; its property was protected; its personnel moved on army orders; transportation on the railroad was free of charge; and gasoline and oil were furnished.

By order of the commanding officer the welfare work in the area was carefully divided. The Salvation Army had three points near Coblenz and the work at the disciplinary barracks. The Red Cross had a hut at the hospital. The A L A continued to administrate its great library. All other welfare work for the soldiers was placed in the hands of the Association. The area held by our troops was described by a radius of thirty kilometers with Coblenz as a center and with one point, Kreuzberg, some sixty kilometers from Coblenz. About eighteen huts, with rolling canteen service to outlying detachments, were required to serve the area, including a center in the army base at Antwerp, a small hut at the docks, and, for a short time, a hut at Romagne for the Graves Registration Service.

One aim of the Association and the desire of the officers was to give these young soldiers as much as possible of American life

and to this end it became necessary to carry on a large business plant, providing equipment that could not be purchased in a foreign country nor brought from America except at delay and great expense. It thus came about that the Association manufactured for itself all manner of supplies, ranging from layer cakes to piston pins, and became business manager of an ice-cream plant, two bakeries, a machine shop, and carpentry, painting, and upholstery establishments. The definite educational work for the soldiers is now in the hands of the army, but the Association still found opportunity for service of this nature, through the library, lectures, entertainments, and the bulletin boards.

### A Laboratory

In so complicated and swiftly changing a task as that with the AFG, it is impossible to give more than an anecdote here and there that may show the difficulties and discouragements of the work, the satisfactions that the workers themselves found, some notion of the possible results to the soldiers, and those features in which it differed from both the war and the former peace service to our troops.

The funds to meet practically all the wishes of the army and to supply to the workers all the necessary equipment are seldom forthcoming as they were in this closing piece of work for our army of the Great War. This in itself gave a freedom to the staff and allowed them to devote themselves in a fashion not often possible to what seemed to them the essentials. The situation of the soldiers themselves was extraordinary. Most of them young for army life, and utterly unwonted to its discipline, they were surrounded by people technically enemies but toward whom they had no personal animosity. Their pay was beyond the dreams of the British and French troops to either side of them, while the safeguards of the days of the AEF—the insurance, the home allotment, the free remittance—were all removed, and the falling rate of the mark raised their money to fantastic values. Although drill was stiff, and the whole army was kept at top notch of condition, and study in the post schools was for the less advanced obligatory, yet there was much free time and no sense of responsibility or danger to steady these thousands of lads. Such was the condition confronting the Association, a condition fraught with dangers and discouragements not evident to the visitor who saw only the well set up soldiers, the smoothly running machinery, the eager and busy men and women of the Association staff.

In some of its features this adventure in welfare work will probably never be duplicated, but from an experiment carried out

under such favorable conditions there must be lessons of practical value for all those engaged in any sort of effort for the well being of homeless men.

## Two Letters

[The following letters of General Allen and Colonel Peek are taken from many such commendations sent to the Coblenz headquarters, and have been selected because they express the aim in the minds of the Association staff throughout all the varied activities of the organization.]

MY DEAR MR. SPRENGER:

I have had occasion several times to write letters to you and to officials of the Young Men's Christian Association serving under you expressing my satisfaction in the work performed by that organization.

The Association on duty with the American Forces in Germany is performing a great work. Only those who are intimately connected with these forces can realize the great service this organization is rendering. I have seen welfare organizations working under all sorts of conditions in France during actual operations; after the armistice, with the Third Army of Occupation in Germany; and with the present American Forces in Germany. We all recognize that nothing is absolutely perfect. Some things approach the degree of perfection closer than others. It is natural that there were a great number of mistakes during the World War and immediately thereafter. Mistakes were made in all organizations, including the army, navy, and others. Those in authority have seen a great number of these mistakes; they have been corrected in the military service as well as in the welfare service. Today the Association with the American Forces in Germany is a smooth-running machine. Kinks have been ironed out and as stated above it is performing a most efficient service.

It is impossible for the American soldier to find among the entertainments and amusements offered him by the civilians of the occupied area those entertainments and amusements which he is used to in his native country. The language and ideas are entirely different. In order to keep this soldier contented, raise his morale and that of the entire command, and increase his efficiency, it is necessary to place within his reach entertainments and amusements which he is used to in his own country. The Association has accomplished this in an excellent manner. Within the numerous huts throughout the American area everything has been offered the soldier from grand opera to vaudeville. Excellent

canteen service is furnished him and he is able to see and talk with women from his own country.

It is my firm belief, and in expressing this I am also expressing the ideas of the commanding general, that the operation of the Young Men's Christian Association with the American Forces in Germany is the most efficient way of handling welfare organizations in the American army.

Sincerely,

G. M. PEEK,

A. C. of S., for Operations, A F G.

MY DEAR MR. SPRENGER:

As you are about to start for the United States for a conference of the Young Men's Christian Association, at which possibly you may be expected to make an account of your stewardship on the Rhine, I would like to have you express to this conference of leaders my sincerest appreciation of what has been accomplished under you for the welfare of our soldiers.

I should state that the organization of the Association here is a wholesome result of evolution, and it works with all the units of the American Forces in Germany in such complete accord and harmony that nothing better is to be desired in this respect. I am of the opinion that soldier welfare work has never before reached the present high standard maintained here.

The effect of the operation of the Association activities in the American zone has had and continues to have a highly beneficial influence on the morale and discipline of this command, and I should deeply regret to learn that any radical changes were contemplated.

Very truly yours,

HENRY T. ALLEN

Commanding General A F G.

## PLAY FOR ALL

No sooner had the veterans of the Third Army unlimbered their packs after the chase to Sedan and thence to their permanent billets in Coblenz than they demanded more fighting—the friendly but hotly contested combats of ring and “gym” and field.

By July, 1919, when the American Forces in Germany were created, the organization of sport under the combined supervision of the army and the Association had attained a scope and degree of perfection which embraced the interest of every officer and

enlisted man and found expression in practically every form of active exercise. Major General Henry T. Allen, commanding the A F G, was ever ready to lend his support and encouragement to the principle that the morale of an army is effectively reinforced through healthful recreation.

A carefully planned organization was essential for play needs of the more than 15,000 men in the Army of Occupation in its early days. At the head of the athletic work of the A F G was the chief of the war plans and training section. By his direction the athletic activities functioned under the supervision of the chief athletic officer. The Association's athletic department operated under this section, and its athletic director had charge of the technical operation of athletics under the supervision of the chief athletic officer, who coordinated the sports schedules to the military training schedules and policies.

All equipment issued and all moneys spent by the athletic department were authorized by both the chief athletic officer and the Association's auditor, and every effort was made to conserve the available funds. So far as possible, committees were formed to decide on the merits of protests and to institute local rulings in the matter of competitions. Athletic schedules were planned to conform to the policy of providing athletic recreation for every one connected with the A F G. This was done by two methods: first by providing a large variety of standard and specialized sports, so that every officer and enlisted man had an opportunity to engage in his favorite pastime, and second by operating a mass game schedule in connection with the regular military training schedules. Detailed records of activities and participants indicate that about ninety per cent of the entire enlisted force were reached by this system.

But statistics cannot indicate the full place of athletic competition and mass games in the life of the individual soldier of the A F G. The opportunities they offered were not merely for the practiced athlete but equally for the boy who had not yet learned how to play or to compete. The development of league organizations, progressively representing companies, battalions, and regiments, brought officers and enlisted men together both as team mates and as competitors—an interesting demonstration of democracy and of the fact that discipline, which remained undisturbed, embraces in its philosophy no small element of good sportsmanship.

The "Best Yank" competitions, conceived and organized by the athletic director of the Association, developed a surprising number of all-round capable athletes from both rank and file.

Brigade, regimental, and company athletic officers, reporting to the chief athletic officer, were responsible for athletics in their respective units and worked in cooperation with the athletic directors appointed by the Association. The matter of printing, schedule making, the furnishing of equipment—which averaged close to \$6,000 every month—the supplying of officials, transportation to games, trophies for all events, and the large force of German laborers necessary to keep grounds in order are a few of the hundred of items involved in the task of giving to the soldier the chance to play.

In Coblenz athletics were concentrated at three centers—Carnival Island, the "Y" Athletic Club, and the swimming pool. The athletic grounds located at Carnival Island are as complete as any on this side of the Atlantic, being laid out with the same care and skill as that given to our university fields. The army solved the labor problem incident to this project and the equipment was supplied by the Association. The city of Coblenz was so interested by the possibilities of this superb playground that it gave twenty thousand marks towards the building. There are two cinder tracks, one with a circumference of a sixth of a mile and used for horse shows, the other being an oval four hundred and forty meters with a straightaway two hundred meters in length. The baseball diamond is of big-league perfection, and the football fields—one for soccer and the other for rugby—are models of their kind. Around three of the fields are bleachers and grandstands for the use of spectators, and a club house with baths arranged for the convenience of the players.

To the doughboy with his enthusiasm for boxing, the "Y" Athletic Club will remain in a niche apart among his memories of the Rhineland. Prior to May, 1919, this building, without architectural pretensions, but possessed of ample size for big events, was known as Liberty Hut, and was used for general social and welfare activities, such as lectures, moving pictures, and entertainments. Boxing bouts were at first conducted in the Festhalle, but owing to the unsuitability of this building for such shows, Liberty Hut was turned over to the athletic department and was gradually transformed until it eventually became the center in the Coblenz area for indoor athletic activities. An indoor track was installed so that the track enthusiasts might have their winter training and competitions. Within its wooden walls were held all the army indoor track meets and here were staged the championship boxing and wrestling bouts of the American forces.

The indoor plunge at Coblenz was operated by the Association from the beginning of the occupation period. Although of

moderate size, it supplied the needs of thousands of men and women in the area and contributed thrilling chapters in the athletic history of the AFG, for here records were made and meets were won and lost.

Though these were the three largest sport centers, there were many additional fields maintained and completely equipped by the Association. There were baseball diamonds, football fields, and basketball courts at Mayen and Andernach, a summer swimming pool in the Mosel River, a twelve hole golf course on Constantine Hill. The forty-two tennis courts in the area were kept in good playing condition.

Sons of the officers and men in the AFG were not overlooked. A civilian Boy Scout leader was furnished and the youngsters were provided with what was needed to give them the outdoor fun and activity to which they were accustomed in the States.

One of the most useful features of all this athletic activity was the development of meets between the troops of the different nations occupying German territory. With the hearty cooperation of the army, the Association invited the athletes of the Allied armies on the Rhine to enter into competition in all branches of sport. French, English, and Belgian army commands quickly recognized the gain in friendly relationships to be had in this intermingling on the athletic field. Inter-army contests became popular; back and forth the athletes journeyed, ever fighting hard to uphold the prowess of their respective nations, but constantly maintaining the highest standards of clean play, good fellowship, and warm hospitality. Racial differences of thought, manners, and customs were better understood and adjusted; petty irritations gave way to loyal friendships which could have been formed in no other way.

Many of these contests assumed huge proportions, notably the Armies of Occupation Track and Field Championships held at Carnival Island for three days in July, 1921. This meet was by far the largest and most successful ever conducted by the Allied forces in the occupied territory and, among Allied competitions, ranked second only to the Inter-Allied Games of 1919 in Paris. Besides the track and field events, the program included tennis, swimming, boxing, soccer football, basketball, and a ten thousand meter cross-country run.

The physical directors of the Association had been charged by the army with complete authority in the conduct of the games program. Quite beyond the burden of detail carried in the task of providing the material side of such recreations to an army in a

foreign land, was the responsibility of keeping these activities free from all taint of commercialization, betting and poor sportsmanship. These obvious traits that creep in so easily and soon destroy the morale which clean sport aims to cultivate, never secured the slightest hold in the members of the A F G. As they fought to win, so did they play to win—by fair means only—accepting defeat with good grace and a determination to come through winners next time. It is of this record, which will long stand as a model for promotion of sport in armies, that the physical directors are most proud, and which the Association counts their great success.

## THRIFT AT COBLENZ

The last place in which one would have looked for economy reduced to a science was surely among the Americans connected with the army in the area about Coblenz. Their money was supplied in United States currency and spent in depreciated German marks, a situation not calculated to make one count pfennigs, but if anyone thinks that only Germans practiced thrift, he should have spent a morning at the Association garage in the Fischel Strasse.

When the war work secretary assigned to the motor transport department looked over the cars that were to serve the A F G he found eighty-four old war horses, of which six might by courtesy be called in order. They were a battered lot, used up in service for the A E F, needing about everything that cars can need. Moreover, little to mend them with was to be found just then outside of the United States.

Out of these wrecks he and his staff evolved some sixty serviceable cars, triumphs of the art of making-over, and various impudent improvements on "Henry" made these Fords seem the foster children of the Association shop. They were made up of parts of many. Every bit of metal, bronze, brass, and steel was saved, dealt with in the foundry and smithy and the welding shop, and reappeared in the form of parts constantly needed for repair or replacement. When a motor showed signs of debility, it was sent to the rebuilding department and completely made over. When a disabled car rolled into the "trouble room" it was not just a disabled car, it was an individual, a friend, with a record in the card index of all its adventures and achievements and drivers as complete as though it were a patient at the base hospital.

Across from the forge there came out from the shop wall the long pipe of the air compressor, a contrivance the fame of

which spread swiftly throughout the ranks of the army truck drivers. It was an ingenious arrangement whereby an old Ford motor, a cooling tank, and a few feet of pipe, when connected with the ten horse power motor of the plant, did away with the pumping of tires by hand. But the pride of the shop was the busy saw-mill, such a mill as would have made lumberers laugh aloud. When the Association tried to engage its supply of wood it was found that the one portable saw-mill within reach was of a price corresponding to its rarity. In two days the machinists had set a rejuvenated Ford motor, waiting in the reserve room, to turning a circular saw. Thereafter in odds and ends of time the men would start it humming and the wood pile that meant warm stoves and hearth fires in the huts was always high. In a year this outfit earned 31,200 marks, a fair return on the investment of two days' labor in installation, and the price of a circular saw.

Carpentry and paint shops, a warehouse, and an ice-cream plant of the most approved pattern stood within this Association inclosure, but these dealt largely with new goods and so were less striking examples of what we like to call Yankee ingenuity than the machine shops which were practically all constructed of made-overs and whose sole business was making something new out of discards. The veriest novice, as he saw the work of this inventive secretary and his staff, caught something of the fascination of machinery and of what someone has called the "romance of thrift."

## BOOKS AND PICTURES

### The Schools

Formal school work in the army is now under the officers themselves. This, however, had not been organized for the A F G in September, 1919, and so the educational department of the Association opened three schools for the army. The first of these was short-lived—a night school conducted until Christmas and then reopened under the army until the organization of the general and commercial school was completed in March, 1920. The educational director for the Association became for several months the director of the general and commercial school, and formulated the plan for instruction in this and the unit schools. The courses of study laid out for these schools and the textbooks selected by the Association staff, were still in use at the close of the school in 1922. The school for American children was a unique undertaking, begun at the special request of the officers, who could at the time see no way of arranging for the proper education of their children. When at the termination of two years it was decided

that the maintenance of the school was more than should be carried by the Association, a well-equipped school building with texts for the children's use, pictures, American blackboards and decorations, were loaned to the army school committee and so was made possible the maintenance of the school for the last year. Thousands of easy German pamphlets were distributed by the educational department to recruits and replacements. Lectures were given at the main library. Three minute write-ups on current topics were prepared for use between the movie reels, and pamphlets were printed and distributed for all the great festival days of the year.

### A Reformed Clubhouse

The army library was housed in what had been the club for the officers of the proud 8th Army Corps. The doughboys made themselves perfectly at home on the sofas and easy chairs and at the beautiful oak tables bought specially for Prussian officers, and they were amiably indifferent to the Prussian eagle and the Hohenzollern insignia looking down on them from wall and window.

The American Library Association continued till the close of 1920 to maintain this library of 35,000 volumes which had been collected in Coblenz for the A E F. When it was obliged to relinquish this work it made a gift of the books to the army, but the army being unable to take over the expense and labor of maintenance, this was assumed by the Association. Branch libraries were opened in every hut, save at a few points where they were maintained under army detail. Through the efforts of the Association many current books were added and magazines were provided for all the huts and after use in the huts were gathered and sent to Antwerp for the transports. The central library at Coblenz was open every afternoon and evening to all Americans and Allies in the area, about two hundred soldiers and half as many civilians using it daily. In the mornings it was open for the soldier-teachers of the army schools.

### Desk Happenings

Not long ago a soldier surprised the desk attendant at the main library. "Say, don't you have any of Plato's works?" A search brought to light one lone volume. Later the librarian explained, "Oh, he's one of our steady readers. He never reads anything but psychology and philosophy or books of that nature. He now wants to read Aristotle and we are trying to make an exchange with the Paris library for him."

The month when the men were returning to the States brought requests for information on many and varied subjects. Books on etiquette became popular. The men frankly said that they had forgotten what they once knew about social customs and that they wanted to "brush up on the subject" before going back. One afternoon an officer came in looking for books on poisonous plants. It seems that some of the army mules had been poisoned supposedly from eating yew. He wanted to verify this supposition. A man who was taking advantage of the rate of exchange to get a microscopic outfit came for a book on microscopy. This was one of those few requests that could not be filled. The court of last resort in this, as in all such instances, was the encyclopedias, and of course they did not circulate.

"Hello, Nick!" Two army sergeants had met in front of the issue desk. From the number of "hash marks" on their sleeves one saw that they were old timers. "You see," one explained, "his last name is Carter and I can't help but finish it out." The other said: "We've known each other for a good many years. I succeeded him in a post among the Moros away off in the Philippines nineteen years ago." They say that hard-boiled army men do not read our books, but both those men were among our most constant readers.

In one of the post libraries the soldier in charge was enthusiastic in keeping all matters of detail in the best possible shape. Quite unlearned, he paid the most careful attention to the mechanics of his work and he possessed a lively sense of justice. One day he arrived in Coblenz with a few of his most popular books that were badly in need of first aid. Upon securing his patched-up best circulators he timidly inquired if he couldn't get some new books. "You see I've gone through that there library and I've made an alphabetical list of everything in it. It's a funny thing but there ain't more than two or three that commence with E. I'd like to have a few more that begin with that letter. That's a big library and a library like that ought to have more books beginning with E, don't you think so?"

One secretary told the librarian that there was no use in having books sent to her hut unless strict attention were given to the matter of binding. "Any color so it's red," said the secretary, "and the redder the better. It doesn't seem to make much difference what's inside." In making a distribution of new books, therefore, the majority of the books sent to this hut were bound in red, and all were gone within fifteen minutes after their arrival.

## At the Base Hospital

Somehow I have always felt that bridges are among the live things of the world. They carry you from the spot where you are to the one where you long to be. It may be a drawbridge from an outside world over a moat into a castle of long ago; or it may be a rope ladder from cliff to cliff for the adventurer; or it may be a Westminster Bridge with the Abbey at its foot; or perhaps it is only a plank or log thrown over a brook that carries one to meadows where the flowers are more vivid than on the prosy highway. Now all of these may a book be. We at the hospital feel that the mission of the library has not been so much to minister to those who have wanted books and whose tastes have been formed, for these would have managed to get books for themselves, but to serve those who have never had even a speaking acquaintance with books. So the daily progress of our little book wagon through the wards was slow—just as slow as the working of an unwilling mind. Usually a boy was jollied into taking two books. It was often more of a joke than a choice, but he was sure to read a bit and then, of course, to come back for more.

There were many instances so funny that one wanted to laugh, and so pathetic one found the heart puckered up as one realized how starved and meagre a life some of these men lived. There was the orderly whose entrance into the hut before he went on duty each night was like a whirlwind. "Hope to tell you I beat the world for noise; I'm broke out with it. Say, I gotta get that book back again. Yes, I had it last week, but you can't expect a fellow to get the hull of a book the first time reading. Don't you know I never read a book through till last month? I guess you just better put me down at the head of that reserve list. I'm some little reader, I am." When he first appeared he had never drawn a book. His first was cartoons, Crosbie's "Rookie of the 13th Squad"; his second, Brigg's "Oh, Skinny"; his third, Bairnsfather's "Fragments from France"; and then he launched forth on adventure stories.

Another went off by himself and solemnly sat down with his pencil to tick off the lines while he read his first—one of Zane Grey's. I've often wondered if that author has any idea of the extent of the door he has swung open for many to pass through and beyond. That boy with the pencil never tired of being read to and his favorite was "A Man Without a Country." He came back to the hospital months after his accident and demanded the story again. He had made a pretty long journey since his introduction to "Wildfire." Zane Grey, indeed, is the one author who

can hold a man just coming back to the world after an operation. We always kept one of his stories in reserve to read aloud whenever the nurses asked for help with some patient who had wakened to intense suffering.

Among our "firsts" was a man who met his first "Outlook" at the hospital and this sent him to the atlas, then to the histories, and lastly to encyclopedias. The research ended in a long study of the World Almanac and the remark to another patient, "Now, if you really want to know what France is doing and why she is doing what she is, you just better read the 'Outlook' and you'll know a lot you don't know now."

We must not leave the impression that most of the A F G was illiterate—far from it. But the ready readers were not our problem. The tastes of our patrons were catholic: They ranged from the "Argosy" to the "Atlantic": from the "Dark Mirror" to Emerson's essays and touched most of the points between. One of our greatest pleasures was to serve the nurses. They were great readers, particularly those on night duty, who averaged a book a night, and some of them kept us busy trying to find stiff enough reading for them. Through one of our friends we were supplied with the newspaper funny sheets, and unless one has carried these into a sick ward he can know nothing of what giving really is. I blush now when I think of the petitions I signed back in the States, petitions to have these funny papers made more fit, to make them suitable to be put into children's hands. In all my hospital experience I recall but two instances where men were too sick to hold out their hands for them. One man, just emerging from the ether sleep, saw the sheets in my hands as I talked to another patient, motioned to me to come closer and whispered, "I want a funny. Save a funny for me." He got his funny and dozed off again, his treasure tightly clutched.

### Discovering the Bulletin Board

"Who's Who and Why?" This was the question in colored letters that jumped at the visitor from the center of a bulletin board in one of the soldier huts. The large board was filled by perhaps a dozen familiar faces, such as Pope Pius XI and John Burroughs, Pétain and Hughes. For the week it was on view there was more talk of public men than ever before in that hut.

Of course bulletin boards are nothing new. The librarians of children's book rooms have long been enticing youngsters toward the classics by means of picture boards. The makers of the boards for the soldier huts in Germany pretend to nothing more than the adaptation of an old idea, but the novelty of this adapta-

tion makes a story worth the telling to Association secretaries and to other social service workers.

Why should the billboard and the full page advertisement be limited to such matters as pumps and breakfast food? The presentation of a tire that persuades men to buy it is worth a fortune to the manufacturer. Why not present ideas as well as things? Churches, settlements, clubs, community centers, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, all such organizations are working for definite returns though returns not to be measured by money. They strive for greater culture, nobler thought, more righteous living. Time was when such matters were thought to be adequately dealt with by preachers and teachers, but these now have rivals who outdo them in constancy and attraction. The pictorial daily and the movies work seven days a week and one must be constant and clever to keep up with them.

The hut secretaries of the A F G chatting daily with the soldiers, meeting constantly problems of morale, striving in all they did to waken interest in worth-while matters, found plenty of topics that lent themselves naturally to the billboard. It could be used to turn attention to current affairs; to teach the meaning of the holidays; to meet existing interests and carry them into fields worth exploring; to humanize geography; to pique curiosity as to the places men might visit on leave; to acquaint them with artists, writers, musicians, statesmen—folk who have made the world richer by having lived in it.

But to be worth while a board need not be highbrow. In fact it must never be highbrow. There was a board of extraordinary popularity in the A F G, "Girls of All Lands." The soldiers admired them all with due chivalry but they voted the American girl the best of the lot. Then there was "Being a Boy." Funny papers and magazine covers mostly went to its making, and the grouchiest sergeant was bound to feel more cheerful after a study of these delightful, troublesome, absurd youngsters doing all the absurd things boys always do. "Say, fellows, it's dogs," called the soldier who had stopped before the new board at the top of the Festhalle staircase. Probably not a soldier of all the hundreds that entered the great amusement building at Coblenz that week failed to stop and smile before that collection. Every sort of dog was there except unhappy ones, and the men studied it, and laughed, and went away to tell one another stories of the pets that had companioned their boyhood.

A request from an understanding officer led to a series of boards on places of interest within short leave distance of Co-

blenz—the Bavarian Alps in the region of Oberammergau for instance, familiar from a lecture on the Passion Play that was popular in all the huts. The Rothenberg board was headed by a photograph that showed two American soldiers looking from a height over its broken roofs. The Nuremberg board bore in illuminated letters the following verses:

Here, when art was still religion,  
With a simple reverent heart  
Lived and labored Albrecht Durer  
The evangelist of art.

Here Hans Sachs, the cobbler poet,  
Laureat at the gentle craft,  
Wisest of the Twelve Wise Masters  
In huge folios, sang and laughed.

This verse, of course, led to no end of questions and to a Durer board.

There were visitors from Poland in the area and shortly there went the rounds of the huts a board made from the gay friezes that are known to Polish nurseries. These showed the native dress and customs and between the pictures ran the legend, "Peasant Life in Poland, the homeland of Chopin, Paderewski, and Mme. Curie." Here again were suggestions for the hut musicians, for the chat in the cafeteria, for the next board.

The board had a great function on the holidays. Here came the chance to discover among the men artists who could make decorative borders or perhaps the whole design for Christmas or Easter. Often the men brought in photographs and post cards, treasure trove from their furloughs, some of these very beautiful, and a board made by one of their own number was of immense interest and pride to the unit.

Such a plan of silent teaching is not to be carried out without broad knowledge and an understanding of the other fellow's point of view in the first place. The possibilities are great but such boards are nothing if they are not prepared with the same care and intelligence which the real teacher gives to preparation for his class and the speaker to preparation for his audience.

## HUTS AS SOLDIERS SEE THEM

How will the men look back on the Weissenthurm hut we wonder? Many of them we are sure had never seen such an ideal place in their wandering days. Did they appreciate the cunning

parchment shades, the Dresden plates, the brass candlesticks, the wonderful shade of blue in the cloth of the upholstery, the dainty design of the curtains, not to mention the prints all so carefully chosen and placed? Did it mean anything to them? How much is it interwoven with development in their lives?

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It is a good thing that our influence and the results of our work do not depend entirely on material things. If they did our work would fall far short. The other evening, a sergeant, who with four others has recently been transferred to this organization, said, "By golly! I don't know why we come to this 'Y' every night. You haven't much of a place, but you've got 'beaucoup' atmosphere all right. Just guess that's the reason, for we are certainly surprised to find ourselves here all the time."

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The enthusiasm of the men at the reopening of the huts after maneuvers has been very gratifying. This has been perhaps the more noticeable among those who had remained at the post than among the men who had gone on maneuvers. It was notably the case at Metternich. Here a number of men had shown an unfriendly spirit on account of the exclusion of German "frauleins" and the enforcement of the order against smoking during movies and entertainments. This prejudice has now been overcome and the men are all friendly towards the "Y."

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These are the closing days at Mulheim and the attitude of the men is an immense satisfaction. It makes one think of A E F days. They use the hut all their free time. They read or play cards, talk, play pool, or sometimes just sit and think, perhaps doze, for many of them work hard and are tired. And no matter where the "Y" woman worker is sitting, at the reading table maybe making out cards for delinquent readers, she finds presently four or five of the men sitting near her, to entertain or be entertained. One man the other evening who had been half resting, half dreaming before the fire said: "This is like home. I wish we could have more rainy evenings. I like to think of all the pleasant winter evenings our other 'Y' girls and the soldiers have had before this fire."

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It was quite late. The men had gone home early for they stood bed check at nine, so I was walking alone down camp to 'phone Coblenz. Half way down I met a soldier on the road, to my amazement a man I had known in Ehrenbreitstein. He had come all the way out to Wehr just to see me, he said, because it

was "Mother's Day," and I had made the "Y" seem so like a home to him, the only home he had known for a long time. I finished my telephoning and we went back to the "Y" and then I found out why that fat, soft desk-soldier, for he does paper work somewhere at Headquarters now, had walked all the way from Brohl, all up-hill too, to find little Wehr. He asked in a tone that tried to be casual if I had seen the Sunday paper. It had been a busy day and I had not, and then he had to tell me. The pictures of all the men in the A F G who wear the D. S. C. were printed and he was among them, and he had wanted to tell someone who was "his family." He was like a little boy taking some dear prize to his mother. He told me how he won the cross, then played some of his beautiful music, and then I filled his pockets with cookies and he set out on the long hike over the hills to Andernach.

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We have fitted up a little corner of the reading room with bright pillows, plants, a table with sewing basket, and a bird which sings, and it proves a favorite sitting room for the boys, one of whom voiced a significant observation when he said, "I don't like that corner—it makes me homesick."

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There are a few soldiers who see the great thing we are attempting to do and comment upon it; others look at the hut only for its material advantages. One man, expressing in his own way his appreciation, said, "I'm glad we've got a 'Y' here. It's such a *handy* thing! No matter what you want the 'Y's always got it." They depend upon us for everything they need, great or small, and take it for granted that they will always find it. One soldier burst in upon me this morning with "Oh, Bobbie, have you got any fishhooks? Give me two!" I couldn't supply the fishhooks but that his faith in Aladdin's lamp might not be shaken I took him to a near-by store and purchased them for him. This faith the soldiers have that we will never fail them, their splendid attitude while in the hut, their almost jealous protection of their "Y" girl make the work with them a continuous pleasure.

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There is not a man in the company now who does not use the "Y" to some extent and many are in every day. More men have used the canteen this month than ever before. They are always bringing us pets, our latest being a dignified duck called "Pops." The men take "Pops" down to the river for a daily swim and the German population is much interested in the spectacle of American soldiers driving a large duck through the streets.

The men are good about helping. They have even been known to hem our aprons! When the hut opened the Germans in the village said it was useless as the men would never come, that they would rather drink in the cafes. Now they say they cannot understand why the soldiers stay in the "Y." "Why, they seem to think it's their home!"

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"Yes," said an engineer looking up from his book, "I've been here since we marched in from France, and anybody who said anything against this 'Y' would kick about his own home. It has always been open and comfortable and a fellow has always been welcome." This remark ignited a lad with 16th Engineer insignia who sat opposite. This is the company which has just come down from Kreuzberg and each man is certain that their secretary is the very finest woman who ever wore the blue and grey uniform, and that her hut was the most homelike of any in the A F G. At the slightest opportunity they explode, and "tell the world." "Lady," said this boy sympathetically, "I hate to say anything against your hut, but our little 'Y' had it *all over* this big place."

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In the big recreation room a fire blazes on the hearth. In easy chairs or stretched out on the cushioned benches a dozen soldiers are poring over the newly arrived magazines. A table of pinochle players and another of bridge are bidding and over-bidding each other with much amusing by-play. A man from the doorway calls out "Doug Fairbanks reel tonight" and then a contented silence settles over the room. Resolved not to break the quiet, a blessed relief to these men from noisy barracks, I sit sewing in the corner. The rain beats against the windows, the fire crackles, the canaries sing a bit, the black kitten frisks about teasing some of her special friends, but there is no other sound until suddenly the cuckoo clock strikes five and we are startled to realize that a whole hour has gone by in silence.

Such is a typical afternoon at Infantry. Not so long ago there were fifteen hundred men in the compound and the hut resembled nothing so much as a humming beehive. The rooms were full and a line of soldiers waited before the canteen counter. The "Y" women on duty were busy from morning till night, but amid all the infinite detail of cooking and housekeeping and business they created a friendly atmosphere and the men felt the hut was their home. Now there are less than three hundred men in the compound, and they are to leave for the States next month. As is always the case before a "Y" closes, the soldiers suddenly

realize how much it has meant to them, and they hover about saying "Gee, we sure have enjoyed this place," and "Say, aren't we going to have a 'Y' in the States?"

## SOLDIERS AS SECRETARIES SEE THEM

On the whole, their spirit is splendid and we feel improves with every passing month. However, they have not attained perfection by any means. One annoying feature of our movies has always been the impatience and irritability of the audience when the film breaks or is blurred. Recently we had a film with several feet indistinguishable just at the climax of the picture. The boys took their usual attitude that it was the operator's or our fault, and the shouting and whistling in the room became so great that we stopped the picture and sent the boys downstairs. They took their punishment like majors, even applauding our action, and since then when the film has broken or been otherwise imperfect there has not been a murmur in the room.

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Just now we have, perchance, a very select family, for only men with first or second class conduct cards can use the hut. So many of the third class conduct card men used the hut as an excuse to slip off down town that about ten days ago we were put off limits for one evening for everybody and permanently for pink passes. Sad as it is that we cannot minister to all alike—white cards and pink—the sheep and the goats—it is really rather a pleasant experience for once to have just the steadier citizens around. One really has time to know the quiet and good men, who in a larger group are so often lost to view because the noisier and often more worthless element make so many more demands. In this connection I have recently come to the conclusion that there must be something superior about a mule. Otherwise how can you account for the peculiar charm possessed by many mule-skinners? In part it may be that they are all country-bred men. Anyway, it is the quiet-eyed, slow-moving, chequer-playing mule drivers whose conduct cards now let them come to the hut.

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Prize-fighters was the subject under consideration. Becky, sitting in the midst of many soldiers, volunteered the information that she had never known any at home. Instantly two spoke up. That was their profession in civilian life. We found we had many. The nice boy who had such pleasing manners and always treated about five fellows, was "Delaware Jack." The soldier

who patiently practiced with one hand day after day on our piano was "Mike, the pugilist." The rough youngster with six gold teeth, all in front was "The Kid," and there were others.

One of our staunchest "Y" friends astounded us one day by saying, "Leavenworth is not such a bad place. I did thirty-six months there, and three years in Alcatraz. Learned my trade of painting there. How'd I get there? Oh, booze and A. W. O. L. and trouble with an officer. I started in to work when I was ten, on my own."

One had been a "moonshiner" and he just didn't get caught and that was all. Another had a narrow escape in selling drugs. Many are young boys with army ages and home ages, probably about seventeen in reality. Life called to them and the army slogan, "Enlist for Germany," seemed the answer.

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"I want a good book on history," said a soldier who dropped in at the hospital library one afternoon. "You like good books, don't you?" asked the librarian when she had found something for him. He explained his views on reading. "Now you know that my brother is much smarter than I am and a much better business man, but somehow he doesn't get half the fun out of each day that I do. He came over here last year and took me on a trip over Europe at his expense. But a cathedral or a castle to him was only an old, run-down building that needed repair, and even sight-seeing was a bore. Then I began to know what books had given to me. That's one of the reasons why I stay in the army. I have time and books to read, and then I can see some of the places that are associated with big events and wonderful people. History's pretty wonderful, isn't it?"

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What is the "Y" doing for the boys? Or is it doing anything? There is an average of six hundred men in the hut daily, out of a possible thousand. At the beginning of the month they are buying, eating, eating, buying; toward the end of the month they are "mooching" a bit off each other if possible, but mostly "sitting." They don't miss a trick either. Every word and action of the "Y" girls is noticed by watchful eyes—eyes used to judging by different standards of a different world, perhaps a reformatory world, or a prison one, or a homeless one, or just a plain, evil one. How carefully every flippant, joking word must be weighed.

How much good can we do them? My conclusion is much good. In this short time I have seen two boys who were rough beyond description quiet down, aim for higher ideals, strive for gentlemanly conduct, because that ideal was stressed. "You've



THE SOLDIERS' LIBRARY, ONCE A PRUSSIAN OFFICERS' CLUB



THE FAVORITE CAFÉ OF THE 6TH FIELD ARTILLERY



THE HOSPITAL LIBRARY



CHRISTMAS AT FORT CONSTANTINE



THE "Y" ATHLETIC FIELD ON CARNIVAL ISLAND



THE FESTHALLE, USED BY 3,000 MEN A DAY



A "Y" WINDOW IN FORT EHRENBREITSTEIN



THE ARMY CHURCH AT ANDERNACH

set me to thinking," one boy who was planning an escapade announced. "I've got a mother back home and I guess I don't want to worry her."

"Say, don't be blue," one lad urged. "Be like Becky. I just heard her say to a guy who said he had something to tell, 'Oh, I know it's something nice!'" Do you think they miss anything? Decidedly not.

Tonight a boy said, "I've got a white pass, but I don't want to go to Coblenz." Others have said the same thing. Where would they go if the "Y" wasn't warm and inviting and wholesome? "Wouldn't nearly so many boys come here if you-all weren't so nice and jolly," a boy delighted us by saying. It's our job, you see, and we do want to make good on it.

## PAY DAY

[Every hut secretary in Germany lived through a season of depression after each pay day. The experience in Germany proves, if proof were needed, that something more than athletics and healthful entertainment and interesting occupation and artistic club rooms are needed to keep men steady. In one hut where the men were holding a contest of original cartoons the one greeted by the men as sardonically true to their life was that entitled "Pay Day," representing the gate of the compound, a long line of "fräuleins" filling the rest of the picture. The following paragraphs taken from different reports perhaps show the day at its worst, for often it meant nothing more apparent to the visitor than the absence from the hut of a great part of the men and their return somewhat shamed faced a week later.]

Pay day always brings its problems just as it does in every American factory or mill-town, because many men have neither learned to save their money nor spend it wisely. The rapid fall in the value of the mark has increased the problem since a private soldier exchanging his dollars gets more marks than a German bank president. Generally speaking, the conduct of the men is fine in spite of the fact that they occasionally drink more than they should. If a drunken man comes into a hut, as sometimes happens, the soldiers present are alert and tactful in taking care of him and in protecting the "Y" girls from any disagreeable incidents. While it is always disheartening to see a soldier drunk who is really a splendid man at heart with fine possibilities, it is also encouraging to know that usually the man who has been drunk comes the next day and apologizes for his slip. The Association is meeting keener and keener competition from German

cinema and vaudeville houses and other amusement features where films and acts that are rather questionable are used to draw the soldiers. The admission to these attractions amounts in marks to hardly more than the cost of a postage stamp. At the German cafés soldiers are given credit both for meals and liquor. Yet the huts continue to be as popular as ever without lowering in the least the standard of the movies or vaudeville and without extending credit to soldiers at any time.

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We noticed a more than usual scarcity of boys after last pay day. Ordinarily they come to the canteen to eat whether they remain in the hut or not, but what with the exchange so much in their favor and pay day following right on the heels of the fall maneuvers and the review for General Pershing, they all promised themselves a celebration. It was not until the second week in the month that we began doing the business we ordinarily do the first week. We got through pay day with only one distressing incident although that one was quite the worst we have ever had. Three boys much intoxicated came to the canteen and one of them was rude to the "Y" girl serving him. He was told to put down his tray and leave the canteen, whereupon a fourth lad who was intoxicated but who had been behaving very well, challenged the other drunk to a fight because he had been rude. The secretary turned her attention to preventing the fight and had just about succeeded when still another drunk came in. He also felt it his duty to take up the cudgels in her behalf and challenged the offender. By that time a fight was inevitable as there were five hopelessly intoxicated men involved and the secretary, at best, could disengage only one at a time. Some boys who had been having a quiet game of pool decided it was time to interfere. They pushed them all outside and told them to go to it. Of course one of them got a bloody nose immediately, in fact he was quite knocked out, which had the effect of sobering them all. We don't encourage drunks in our huts at all and we feel that we have surprisingly little disorder in proportion to the number of men we serve but we never know what a pay day may bring forth.

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The last pay day was rather a bad one from the standpoint of the number of drunks seen in the hut, and many men whom we had never before seen in that condition, in fact the very men who seemed to most enjoy the privileges of the "Y" "stepped out." The only way we can account for this fact is that they wanted to have what they call "one last real time" before going on the long maneuvers and no one seemed to care how soon his money was

spent. It was discouraging to us and more so because there seems to be no idea on the part of most of those men that there is anything wrong in it. We feel that this battle against drinking is the very biggest problem we have to deal with and almost impossible at times to cope with. Many men have expressed their desire to return to America just to get away from this temptation over here, which constantly surrounds them.

## SUNDAYS

As for services, you just never can tell. Tonight, it was unusually hot in the hut. H. was not to be there and I was rather dubious as to the service—especially the singing—for I sing too little to lead, and H. sings so well. Usually as seven-thirty, church time, draws nigh the crowd gets slimmer and slimmer, but somehow tonight, they kept on playing cards, etc. How I wished the speaker would arrive. But it was not until quarter of eight that the "Y" car with speaker and soloist, drew up. And the movies were to be at quarter past eight. Well, the speaker arrived—and most of the men left! However, some did not go far—just to the door-step. I went out to caution them not to be noisy and added, "But I wish you'd come in." Suddenly they burst out "Let's all go in!" And they all filed in, twenty-eight, some of our regulars,—though our regulars are rather irregular—and some who had never been to a service before. Even though it was hot and time for the movies they listened with no restlessness. The soloist, Herr Huth, was much appreciated. I wondered if the speaker's very quiet way of talking was not perhaps one reason of his effectiveness. As to singing! Thank goodness they needed no leader! They just sang. But perhaps next Sunday we will have only five men for the service. You can never tell.

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On Sunday we began our religious services. The attendance is small but we have never met with such attention and such harmony. Each man enters into the responsive reading and prayers—one man requesting on the first day that we be sure to have the Lord's Prayer as he knew that. They have wanted to sing every verse of the hymns. We have had more and more discussions on books, world events, music, just as a family group at home would discuss these things. Opinions and ideas very worth while are brought out and certainly show that our men can think and do. We have many pleasant gatherings around the piano—in fact practically every night, and we do not sing rag-time and jazz either.

Our Sunday services are marked with a spirit of reverence, and where formerly one secretary policed the canteen while services were in progress in the adjoining room, now that necessity is done away with. Those that attend come because they desire to and really enjoy it. The secretaries have found a ready response which is most helpful, particularly when the "Y" girl herself has to conduct the service, the most trying ordeal in her varied experiences as a secretary.

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We took the first steps towards organizing a Bible discussion group last week. We decided to keep it very informal at first. The speaker was introduced to the boys in the recreation room and no attempt was made to stop their activities. The boys playing cards and reading magazines nearly all laid them down of their own accord and two groups who continued to play listened to every word and even took part in the discussion. From sixty to seventy-five men listened attentively for thirty-five minutes and responded most intelligently to the splendid man-to-man discussion on what is essential to success in life, with emphasis laid on the Christian standpoint, and when asked if they would like to have the leader come back the following week they all shouted, "Sure!" We feel that we approached the thing in the only possible way. If we had asked the men to go off in a room by themselves and made it formal probably not more than a dozen men would have responded. Not only would they be afraid of the thing themselves but they would have been afraid of that dreadful mob spirit among these men which subjects a fellow to unmerciful kidding in the squad rooms if he is seen doing anything unusual, particularly if it is a step in the right direction.

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Last Sunday evening Chaplain Lloyd spoke. The churchly way in which he conducted the whole service impressed us deeply. He did not stoop nor attempt to make it informal nor cater in any way to the men. It would have done credit to a cathedral. This attitude seemed to create a rather unusual spirit of reverence and yet did not at all lift the service over the men's heads. On the contrary, many went up to the chaplain at the close of the service and have since spoken to us of how much they appreciated it all. In the past at times, the thought of a religious service and all it involves in a hut has almost terrified us and we found it necessary to make it as informal as possible at first. But now every man knows that this hour is given over to worship once a week and what is expected of him as a participant in the service. There has been no camouflage but we now feel that the time has

come when these services should have the best that we can give them in every respect and we mean to lend every aid to give the service this spirit of dignity and holiness.

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The old gardener of the village is coming today to begin setting out plants and preparing flower beds, and we expect to have a few blooms by Easter. Also we expect the Easter rabbit to visit us, and the chaplain is planning an excellent Easter sermon. By the way, the chaplain is certainly a convincing speaker, and it is a pity the army at this particular post isn't required to respond to church call. There probably would be quite an increase in manliness among the soldiers, and an increase in their self-respect.

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The Sundays are very sweet, quiet, steadily busy days: the men begin coming in at nine for breakfast, some staying for the religious services. In the afternoon they come again and by night it is crowded in spite of the fact that so many men go to Andernach on pass. It is the only day one really gets a chance to talk to the men, their hours in the "Y" are so short on week-days, and yours, consequently, so full, that you don't get time.

For the past few days I had been talking to the men about a wonderful rock formation I had just discovered only about fifteen minutes' walk from Wehr—great masses of rock, evidently left by some great upheaval in past geological ages. I went to the monks' library at Maria Laach as soon as I discovered the rocks, for literature on them so that I could make them more interesting, but, alas, I was not allowed inside and had to talk to the Brother through a tiny barred window. But he is going to mail me the information about the rocks. On Sunday after lunch I was going to "conduct a hike" to the rocks, but as most of the men who were interested had gone to Andernach over Saturday and Sunday, my crowd was two boys, the elder, a clean, straight, silent sort of fellow about twenty-three, the other the merest boy, just sixteen, with the sweet, clear eyes of a little lad. I had been attracted to them by the way in which the elder was always looking out for the younger. It was at a casino game that I first noticed him and I had said: "You remind me of a boy at home," and he, in a would-be-very-blasé manner said: "Aw, quit yer kiddin'," whereupon I said: "You look so much like my own little twelve year old nephew that I'm going to call you Bobbie," and instead of resenting the twelve year old part, he was at heart still such a little boy that he just beamed at having found me and loves my calling him Bobbie. So he and the big, grave fellow, who is so wonderfully taking the place of his family, and I, went to the rocks. We

came to a most lovely part, where the dense spruce opened into a perfect idyll of a little valley. I started to quote some bit of frivolous nonsense when both of those boys began reciting the twenty-third Psalm and we all recited it together. But how it "beat me standing"—those lads thinking of that wonderful psalm, while I had thought of mere nonsense. The help does not always come from our side of the counter!

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But to return to Christmas Eve, after the show everybody came back to the hut, which remained open until half past eleven. The canteen was closed, but we served coffee to all comers. The front rooms were full of men waiting for the midnight service, and there was impromptu music followed by the singing of Christmas carols. How they love to sing! Poor little Miss S. had played carols and hymns and old songs in every spare moment for three days, and until she could scarcely bend her arms. She said she hated to stop, the men said it "seemed so like home." Chaplain Smith's midnight service was held in the old Gothic army church, with tall trees massed against the stone walls, and the chancel and pulpit hung with American flags. There were a quartette, our orchestra, and a beautiful violin solo by one of the sergeants. The church was crowded to the doors and the congregational singing of the carols was impressive. Many of us will always remember the salute of the trumpeters to the colors and the recessional, when, with the Chaplain, and bearing the Stars and Stripes and the church banner, the trumpeters passed down the aisle, followed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars with their colors. Not since the war have the church and the flag been so associated in our hearts.

## ODD JOBS

### Honeymoon Special

In our wildest thoughts of the unexpected in a casual camp we never imagined all that might happen. The month of May has brought the very last in surprises. We have had one hundred and seventy-five wives of enlisted men and eighty babies in quarantine before being sent to the United States. They are an all-European product, English, Belgian, Polish, Russian, Italian, French, and German, a great percentage being the latter.

The barracks in the compound where the hut is located was reserved for the women and babies. The hut became a hostess house for their use all day. Here husbands and friends could meet them from two to four-thirty daily. During these hours

Germans came in daily to visit. Each afternoon there was some sort of entertainment. The 6th Field Artillery band played several days, Headquarters band one day, and the Association staged boxing matches and put on vaudeville shows. Each evening there were moving pictures.

The stage was transformed into an infirmary where physical examinations were made. An army nurse and a doctor were on duty at all times and made the hut their headquarters. For this reason it was necessary to keep open day and night. The rest room was put to all sorts of service. Indeed it was almost the center of the depot used constantly by the numerous officials because of the telephone. One day it was the scene of a unique wedding. A soldier who had married a Polish woman two years ago in Poland had lost his marriage papers, so the ceremony had to be repeated before they could return to the States.

Instead of giving out lunches at the compound when the Honeymoon Special left for Antwerp the last task was to place a bag of lunch on each bed in the hospital train for the wives and children and in the compartments for the men, and then it must be confessed the secretaries went back thankfully to their usual work with full-grown American soldiers.

### Field Work

The shooting season is on. For nearly a month the machine gunners of the Second Brigade have been camped beside a little creek in the barley fields of Plaiddt. With three streets of squad-tents, three big army kitchens, officers' row, infirmary, and ever-present guardhouse, the camp is a city unto itself. Off to the right are the six hundred and one thousand meter targets ranged along the hillside; and to the left, in the town of Plaiddt, is the hut.

Its service was never more needed nor more appreciated than during these first days. Practically no work could be done on the range because of bad weather. The camp was wet and muddy, cold and disagreeable. To know that in the "Y" hut there were two roaring fires, plenty of magazines and games, a good supply of just the food the soldiers liked, and a willing friend to look after their comfort, meant everything to the men just then. They came to the hut as soon as it was opened and stayed until it closed at ten. During those first few days of bad weather they got the habit of spending their spare time there so that later, when they were kept on the range all afternoon, they came as soon as they were free and played games or wrote letters until time for the movies.

There were movies every night except once when a soldier show from the station hospital came out to us. The film which

the men most enjoyed was the one of these soldiers themselves in camp, showing their everyday life, in the mess line, on the range firing the machine guns, marching by companies, and at the hut. This picture, advertised a day in advance, was a great drawing-card. Every officer and man—except the necessary guards—was at the hut that night to see himself in the movies.

### The Rifle Range

Little Wehr of the rifle ranges was no beautifully planned hut, but ministered to all just by using materials at hand. The material in this case was the inevitable hall attached to the largest "wirtschaft" in every German village. How many times have we thanked our stars that these stolid folk are gregarious when it comes to taking their beer. In almost every village you can find a hall often out of all proportion to the size of the village. That in Wehr is up a flight of steps in the rear of the parent "wirtschaft." It is bright and airy and has many windows, half of which open out on the beautiful gardens of the priest's house opposite, and this in a way offsets the populous stables almost directly underneath. The walls are marvelous—sky-blue with large medallions in which are painted the castles on the Rhine and the Mosel. "All hand made 'n everything," the men say. "Ain't they wonderful? I'll say they are!" They serve a double purpose. They certainly decorate, all set in sky-blue with a border underneath of fat pink roses in a chocolate background, and they lead to many discussions of the castles themselves, the old robber barons, and far-off days.

Work at a range is different from straight canteening, for the men are more or less on a field basis and we served in the mornings in a tent down on the range. Every morning at ten up came a big army wagon and two mule-skinners, to load us and our wares and drive to the field. The men had early breakfast and even before we could unload a good-natured line would form and then how they would eat! It wasn't "What kind of pie have you today?" and "When were those cinnamon rolls baked?" It was "I want some pie and as many cinnamon rolls as you can spare. I sure am hungry." It was more like picnicking than work, and we reduced the packing and unpacking to a system. Often after we closed we would drive across to the Sprudels, the bubbling mineral springs which always fascinate me. The big, slow-going mules, the high seat in the huge wagon, the little field road winding across the meadow filled with flowers, the dear clean little wind, always blowing, made one feel one's very soul had been up with the larks, which are always singing at little Wehr.

When you are in the field, movies are your one and best form of entertainment. We have them every night and every night the hall is crowded and we are glad, for as the meadow is full of flowers so the village is full of "wirtschafts." I have never seen such a lot of letter writing. The tables are always full and the men write even during movies—some man will be close up to the crack under the curtain, using the light, and I let him be, letters mean so much back home. When you live, move, and have your being, only I think I shall paraphrase that and say "when you live, be, and have your movies," all in the same room, you learn informality. You try to let the men writing write as long as possible, the men reading read as long as possible, to get them all fed, and the movies on and off again, and the men back to camp in time, and you find it keeps you busy.

### The "Pittsburgh" and the "Sands"

Early in July, the "Pittsburgh" and the "Sands" came into Antwerp with about one thousand men. From the day of their arrival there was a record attendance at the hut. B. put extra effort into her already famous meals and it was not long before the gobs were flocking to the canteen for real home cooking. Where they put all the food no one knows, for an ordinary order was "Steak, four eggs, potatoes, rolls, vegetables, salad, strawberry shortcake, and ice cream. Yes, two scoops, please!" From five o'clock to ten thirty or later the hungry sailors came, and after everything else was gone we heard, "Well then, give me six eggs!" While the dinner rush was on in the canteen, the floor of the hut was covered with dancers. The latter part of the visit white uniforms appeared and a more picturesque cool-looking crowd was nowhere to be found.

Was their two weeks' visit strenuous? We'll say it was! But we felt more than repaid for our efforts when several of the boys told us that they had never been treated so well in any port and they hoped they would find a "Y" at their next stop. The following is part of a letter received from one of the Pittsburghers:

"I want to thank you most sincerely for the very fine times you and the others connected with the 'Y' at Antwerp afforded us during our short visit there. You certainly did make us all feel at home, and how well I should like to have remained longer. After all, the work of the Association is quite wonderful, isn't it? I sometimes hear some of our boys deprecate the good it is supposed to do but I am very certain if a hut was to be found in each port we make we would have a better, cleaner, and more efficient crew in every respect. I am just sure of this."

In the midst of the many disappointments and discouragements there occasionally comes something to put new heart into the work and to make us feel that perhaps, after all, our efforts are not fruitless. Our soldiers are markedly selfish and it often seems to us that as time goes on they become more so. During the two weeks that the sailors were with us, however, our hearts were cheered by the unselfish attitude of our boys. They were always most willing to help and direct the visitors, and in the canteen were ready to stand aside and wait patiently until the others had been served. At the dances, of course, there was only a handful of girls, but they willingly played the part of host, and the khaki uniforms among the dancers were few and far between. It is little incidents like these that cheer us and make us feel that, little as we may see it, our work is bringing results.

### The Interallied Meet

For three days in July, 1921, the most successful interallied track and field meet in the history of the Rhineland was held in Coblenz. Athletes representing the British, French, and Belgian armies competed with the men of the A F G. The meet, which was promoted by the Association, under the supervision of Captain L. S. Gerow, welfare officer, A F G, was in all its details most successfully conducted. The Americans won by a score of two hundred and nine points, against one hundred and six points won by the French army, fifty-nine by the British, and thirty-eight by the Belgian. The Allied athletes were billeted in the Falckenstein casual depot. The Association kept its hut at that point open for the use of the men, serving ice cream and lemonade free in the afternoon when the athletes returned from the track, and in the evening giving them moving-picture programs.

There were in the compound British, Belgians, French, Algerians, Moroccans, and Americans. The friendly spirit among the representatives of the various armies was most wonderful. Even the pure negroes in the uniform of French Colonials kept their places beautifully and took in good part quite a bit of chaffing. An Arab from the Colonials even played weird music, full of dissonances, on a three-stringed instrument without being thrown out by the Americans who failed to enjoy it.

An amazing thing was the way in which the French, Belgians, and Colonials caught immediately the Association idea of the position of the American women. One expected the British to understand, but not these other Europeans. One of the Belgians explained that we were the "sisters of the men." They were all respectful, courteous and grateful.

As soon as the men came back from the athletic field, they rushed headlong into the hut. Since the weather was warm we had liberal supplies of lemonade and ice cream on hand. They all said "We like your ice cream." The Red Cross gave us cigarettes in quantities and it is easy to realize how much that meant to men from countries where tobacco is high.

Yesterday a French adjutant-in-chief came in. In the course of his conversation he said the French soldiers had received beautiful treatment and were quite content; that the hut was a fine place; the soldiers would not go to town and drink; they preferred staying in the "Y."

This morning I happened to be in the station when the English and Belgians were entraining. They were all expressing their happiness and gratitude for the hospitality they had received. Then one young soldier, speaking for all the Belgians, said, "We thank very much the 'Y,'" and added much more in his not quite perfect English. They were all repeating "Merci, merci!" and "Come to Belgium with us."

But the most graceful thanks of all were given us by the British. Their sergeant-major spoke for the crowd. He said that he wanted to thank us for what the "Y" had done for them all; that each and every man wanted his gratitude expressed; that their treatment had been beyond compare. Every man stood at attention during this speech. When he had finished we told them how happy we had been to have them with us, and how thoroughly we had enjoyed extending hospitality to them. Then one soldier said "Let's give three cheers for the Y M C A," and they stood there in the station and gave three of the most rousing cheers that old place or any other had ever heard.

The comment of the American contestants was less direct but equally appreciative. "It's so near the end of the month, I'm awful glad you're puttin' out!"

## PARTIES

We ushered the month in by giving a May-day tea which was quite a festive affair, although it could not be accompanied by a maypole or dance or other observances of the day. A picnic would have been appropriate but was out of the question because of the size of our family. We did take our tables and chairs out in the yard under the trees. Touches of company manners always appear when tea is served with just a bit of formality.

A Mother's Day tea was the second social occasion of the month. This was very simple. White and pink carnations were

used for the decorations but we could not get enough to give to each guest. The Mother's Day programs and post cards were distributed throughout the day, and judging by the overflow of the mail box, I should say every soldier sent his card and program home. The evening service was based on the day. Special music was furnished and a talk was given by the secretary.

Tuesday, we had an old-fashioned party. First came enthusiastic singing. They all "let out" on the songs. Before they were tired of singing, games started and without pause or hesitation or waiting for participants, the hilarity continued until ten o'clock. Those who couldn't get into the games were eager spectators. We counted the party a great success, and the secretary from headquarters a skillful and clever leader.

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The second "Battle of the States," which took place the last social evening in July, was a great success. Practically every man in the hut came forward when the discussion was ready to begin and for nearly one and a half hours it was hot and exciting. The shy ones who would not volunteer a word when their state was called for, found their tongues and gathered ready but till then dormant wits to combat the claims of rival states. Various small groups, whose voices could not be heard in the crowd, fought it out among themselves, and bets were made that night in settlement of certain disputes, which were to be paid the following pay day. The soldier will gamble on and over anything. They are always ready to argue and if an interesting and constructive subject is offered they will readily enter in, provided it is discussed in an informal way. The mere idea of a formal debate would terrify most of them.

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Our picture contest lasted a week. We called for contributions of original drawings for the bulletin board and met a ready response in the form of some sixty sketches. The first thing the men did on entering the hut was to aim for the board to see if any new pictures had been added. The subjects were varied and were always clean, ranging from cartoons on incidents in the hut, which were very apt, original, and funny, to German castles and life in general in the Rhineland. Two of the most original and amusing were cartoons of two of the "Y" girls giving a speech in the theatre regarding "spitting tobacco juice" on the floor and "bawling out" the men around the pool table for writing their score in chalk on the table. Not a point was missed in these two sketches from life and we fancy our end was gained better through these pictures by the men than by our speeches. Through this contest

we discovered five men with real talent and feel that through this they may be started on something worth while. We have a corner in a back room where they may sketch undisturbed and we encourage them in every way to make something of this talent.

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We celebrated the Fourth of July in true American style. Starting at nine o'clock in the morning, we had continuous programs at Coblenz, Andernach, and Mayen, so that any soldier or American civilian wishing to take part had only to go to one of these centers to be royally entertained, with everything that goes to make up a real Fourth of July back in the States, beginning with old-fashioned games and athletic sports, such as three-legged races, bag races, obstacle races, pie eating contests, climbing the pole, chasing the pig. These were followed by baseball. Boxing was held in the late afternoon. Vaudeville and moving-picture shows filled the evening till ten o'clock when came the climax of the whole celebration, a fireworks display, which far exceeded that of last year.

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Our Hallowe'en party was a big success. We had decorated the whole hut with witches, cats, and goblins. The men helped us and they had the best time cutting out things and putting them on the wall and they had many original ideas. We had not advertised our party as we had encouraged our men to go to the big one at the Festhalle, thinking it would be a change for them. We planned, however, to get some favors, caps, squeakers, and other things to make some fun for the stay-at-homes. The two secretaries dressed up as gypsies and surprised the men completely. They passed around caps and other favors and soon had everyone interested. The boys had a glorious time diving for apples or rather pushing in those who were really trying to get them. We started with a dish-pan of water but ended with a tub and even that wasn't deep enough to satisfy the ever-zealous "soldat." We played many of the old games such as fruit-basket; spin the plate; beast, bird or fish; and we were surprised at the number of men who stayed at home. The hut was crowded and they surely enjoyed themselves. After all, they are just youngsters.

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We shall probably never think again of November without thinking of Armistice Day, and in the army and the "Y" huts this is especially true. Our hut, like all the others, was open all day. At twelve o'clock one of the buglers blew the call "Attention" and at the expiration of two minutes, he blew "Taps." During the two minutes all of the soldiers in the hut and the "Y"

personnel stood at attention and I think it is safe to say that without exception they were all really praying. The day was not an ordinary holiday but one that seemed to bring home to the men the events that led up to the armistice and the significance of the day. Their minds seemed to dwell on it and they were unusually quiet, and if they talked at all, it was about that.

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How the busy December days have been spent in the Antwerp hut may perhaps best be told by the following translation of an article that appeared the day after Christmas in "Le Matin," an Antwerp newspaper:

"It was through a very kind thought that the American Base held a wonderful party yesterday afternoon in honor of the orphans and abandoned children.

"The secretaries had devoted their time to making this ray of Christmas sunshine for the unhappy little ones. The master-sergeant, chairman of the committee, had collected a large sum among the American officers, civilians at the Base, and the Graves Registration Service.

"About five hundred orphans met at the Base at two o'clock and were served a sumptuous meal. There was a movie—what a wonderful movie—Charlie, king of laughter, brought joy to the souls of all the children. Two negro performers—Oh! what wonderful negroes—entertained with jazz music, dances, and funny songs. Finally Father Christmas arrived, dressed in his legendary costume and distributing toys, no less than four hundred, warm gloves, and mufflers, and giving to each child a stocking filled with bonbons. Oh! wonderful Father Christmas!

"At six o'clock the children went away laughing and shouting with their pure young voices, 'Long live America.'

"Thank you, dear friends and allies, for the charming festivity and touching thought, in short for all that you have done for the poor victims of a war which you have so substantially helped to bring to its close."

This party was given by the men themselves in every sense of the word. They furnished their share of the money, in many cases pledging the amount to be paid on the coming pay day; they shopped for the presents in Coblenz, where money goes farther than it does in Antwerp; they cut, sewed, and filled the stockings; they decorated the hut and trimmed the tree; they helped serve the supper and furnished the music; they played with the children and showed them how to make the automobiles and toy tanks run and for days afterward we heard:

"Did you see that little fellow's face when Butler (Santa Claus) came out of the fire-place?"

"Well, we've given those kids something to think about for a long time."

"I guess when those boys grow up to be soldiers they'll know who their friends are."

To the question: "What did you think of our Christmas party?" we always heard the same answer, expressed in different ways: "It was great—and didn't those kids have a good time." All of which goes to prove that "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

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The great big day of the year has just come and gone. We believe we had the finest Christmas we have ever had in the A F G. It was dignified and beautiful; the huts were extremely lovely. Last year many of the trees were denuded on Christmas night, much to the distress of the "Y" girls, but this year, so far as I know, no trimming on any of the trees has been disturbed and they are standing today intact. We believe that this is wholly due to the fact that in all instances the men helped with the decorating so that they had a particular pride in maintaining their handiwork. They had also seen how much time and effort goes into the preparation for these festive days.

In several of the compounds the commanding officers asked that the celebration which the soldiers were giving to the poor children of the region, be held in the hut. At Artillery Barracks the commanding officer asked the secretary if she had any objection to having in the hut the celebration that the 6th Field Artillery had planned for the poor children. They had expected to have it in the compound, but it being cold and wet, the hut was the only place. It was a joyous occasion and the commanding officer and his staff were all present while the boys handed out the gifts to the kiddies. The boys had wrapped up the gifts most carefully in red paper and red ribbons and it was all done with a fine sense of comradeship.

At Infantry Barracks there was a most fascinating canteen which caused a great deal of amusement and delight among the men. The back of the canteen shelves was arranged as a little fir forest all covered with snow. The lower shelf had great banks of snow on the ground and in a little depression nestled a toy house with little balconies above and below. A wide path from which the snow had been shoveled into high mounds on either side led up to the little porch. A gingerbread Santa Claus leaned against the snow-clad roof ready to make his descent down the chimney,

from which came little white curls of cotton smoke. Little St. Nicholases were whisking about on to the left of the house and all sorts of amusing toy animals completed the scene.

At Constantine the effect when the lights were turned on in the writing-room was like fairyland. On all the lamp shades, of which there are about twenty-five in this one large room, were sprays of the fir interspersed with silver and crystal trimmings, and with the Christmas tree glistening in its many colors, one could not wish for a more beautiful sight. They had so many windows; and such lovely curtains hanging against the soft gray and buff walls, that the whole room lent itself marvelously to the Christmas scheme.

In some way or other the story of our day here is not translatable, but of this I am convinced—that never have we had such a spirit as at this time. Just why, we know not. All we do know is that it is so. Only those who have worked in the huts on these days know how long and hard and strenuous the work is, but there was not a girl on Christmas night but felt in some way or other that it was all good. There was practically no drinking. The cafés closed on Christmas Eve at nine o'clock. The men had contributed thousands and thousands of marks for the poor children of Coblenz. They had been responsible for the distribution of food, clothing, and toys, and the glow that came from doing for others was reflected in the huts.

On Christmas Eve the Carol Club with their trumpeters went through the city in the electric-lighted bus all decorated with Christmas greens. They sang for General Allen, the members of his staff, the station hospital, the Salvation Army, the hostess house, the library, at Mr. Sprenger's and Mr. Eastman's. The hostess house of the Young Women's Christian Association started the day beautifully for us, the workers. A Christmas breakfast was given to all the guests of the house. Fifty-one of us sat down at one time and we had the harpist who is on the Association circuit, and the quartette that had sung the carols for us Christmas Eve. It was a beautiful hour and sent everybody off joyously for the day's work.

## THE LEAST HUT OF ALL

What memories the little "Y" in the valley brings to those who were cognizant of its presence! Tucked away in the Ahr valley, close to the rushing stream, looked down upon by the gaunt ruin of Castle Altenahr, was the "least hut of all." So small it was, indeed, there was grave counseling at headquarters,

when the request came from the officers for help for their hundred boys shut off in this hill-walled solitude. For one hundred soldiers one could not carry on a fourfold program complete. There certainly could not be physical and educational directors and religious and social secretaries, but after all, that was hardly a good reason for not doing what one might to help even a hundred men who without help were certainly not coming back to the United States fit to serve the country. The best that could be done was to open an American home, and the Association at Kreuzberg was that absolutely and nothing but that. This was no costly experiment. Whether it was worth while or not one may judge for one's self by the story woven from the reports of the secretary.

The opening of a bottle of ink was the introduction of the Kreuzberg hut to the men of Company A, 16th Railway Engineers Battalion. Before the floor was cleaned on Sunday morning three soldiers appeared, saying they had not written home for months. There were many letters written that day. Our first week was bitter cold, the German workmen were poky as usual, so that it was not a very inviting or warm place. The motion-picture hall was not ready, the books were delayed. About all we could do was to arrange a corner where the men could write and play checkers and when the workmen advanced to our corner move ourselves somewhere else. We found a friendly spirit among these men and a very helpful one. They continually found little and big things to do about the hut and did them without waiting to be asked. They made repairs on the poor work of the German carpenter. They made footstools and pokers, put the stove in order, painted signs, and, insisting that we must have a flag floating from the "Y," they went into the hills for a flagpole which they painted and set in an iron socket. They took great interest in watching new things appear in the hut and noticed each article.

The owner of our house was inclined to make things unpleasant at first, especially after we made him take his goat from our cellar. We had to get the town major before he would give us the keys. One day he became a bit too insolent and the soldiers promptly put him out and told him to stay out. We found him more reasonable ever after. But he stole a march on us and before we knew what was going on had painted a large white space on the side of the building. On this he assured us that no matter what was said to him he would have "Hotel Brodt" in large black letters the next morning. But by the next morning a large red triangle had miraculously appeared upon this convenient white

ground. No one knew how it got there but someone did know a soldier whose fatigued clothes were much the worse for red paint.

Our problems, and we had more in Peaceful Valley than appeared on the surface, were just the usual ones a bit aggravated by local conditions. The barracks were three-quarters of a mile from the "Y"—a real drawback. The movie hall was in another building and over a wine shop, which was unfortunate. The men had been here long enough without a hut to establish credit at almost all the German places about. When the first group of men came here it was months before they ever drank water. The water is condemned and rather than bother to purify it they began the day with beer. Many of them were on too friendly footing with "frauleins," the "frauleins'" families making every effort to have them feel at home. In spite of all these things it was infinitely worth while to try to make a home for these men. From the stories they have told us we know there was a big opportunity for constructive growth, however slow.

These men were less apt to spend an entire afternoon and evening in the hut than in many "Y's." They came in, read and wrote and visited, went outdoors, strolled on the bridge, and came back again for an hour or so. They were unusually non-destructive and we have never seen men so angelic about ash trays. They adopted immediately a most protecting and helpful spirit toward "the white woman of the valley." On returning from a shopping trip on the first day she found that the town major had brought in two women to help him and had furnished her bedroom and sitting room and hung curtains. Before the canteen was running one of the men, hearing her say she had no marks and deciding she was "broke," came quietly with a roll of money. "Now, you take this and go and get yourself a square meal. I always have a few marks. Any time you need any just you say, 'Private —, come across.'" Her little German maid was scared into extraordinary activity by the threats of the men that something would happen to her if her mistress were not well fed, while one man, with an anxious imagination, endowed the secretary with a troublesome husband and offered to "do him up" if it would give her the least satisfaction. Through a misunderstanding the secretary did not go to a company dinner on one national holiday. Presently a procession came down the road headed by the mess sergeant, who presented a heavy basket. In it was a whole roasted chicken, a tiny American flag stuck in its breast and surrounded by lettuce and green onions, with cherries and chocolate for dessert.

Out in this hamlet we could have no music at the movies, so we used the time between the reels to read short articles. At first

we read items from newspapers. Then we took selections from well-known writers—Kipling, Service, Bret Harte. The men as a rule made no direct comment but often borrowed the articles. They frequently asked what was going to be read, however, and best of all soon began to contribute articles which they thought would be of interest. We found that many would listen with interest to articles which they would not read themselves, indeed would not know existed. One man said he could not understand where we found our readings. "I look and look and never find anything like that." The showing of Charlie Chaplin and Jackie Coogan in *The Kid* meant much to the men away out here. They awaited it so eagerly, one man deferring his furlough that he might see it. Long before it was time to begin, the hall across the bridge, the hut itself, the living room and the canteen, were packed to the doors and the overflow had to sit on the bridge. Everyone who could attend was there, a minimum guard on duty being arranged by the officers.

On Mother's Day we had fifty carnations and these were soon gone. The news spread and we were kept busy putting them in buttonholes. Said one man, "Please, I thank you for putting it on me yourself, for you American girls are the nearest thing we have to mothers." I believe there was hardly a man who did not write home on the cards sent out and enclose a Mother's Day program. We made a special bulletin board for the festival and there were men about it all day long. To several men who wore white carnations we offered our mother and they seemed only too glad to sit down and write to her. We had the hut filled with flowers and one man came in and said he knew it was against the rules to bring in Germans but could he please bring a young lady in just for a moment so that she could see the flowers. One could see that he loved flowers and when he brought the girl in he pointed out each blossom caressingly and then with an air of pride and possession he pointed out everything else.

If one should take the best that a man does by which to judge him, one should surely take the best day of the year by which to judge this work and this, of course, was Christmas Day. The men entered early into the holiday spirit. They helped to decorate the hut as well as their own messhall. Every available space and some unavailable they filled with greens, holly, and mistletoe. They brought in a small tree and decorated it. For this we had real old-fashioned candles and each night the men lit that tree. Bright-colored stockings were made and labeled, one for each man, and filled with nuts and candy and a nonsense toy. After the hut closed on Christmas Eve the officers themselves

came and hung the ninety stockings, ready to surprise the men Christmas morning. The company had had its Christmas dinner on Saturday, the day before Christmas, and at two o'clock in the messhall the men had their Christmas tree for the two hundred children of the village. The tree bore a gift for every child. Afterward we had a movie for them, the men helping through this exciting occasion. The room could hardly have held another child. Most of them had never seen a movie and their amazement and delight were touching. At our Christmas service even the guard-house guests were allowed to come down. The men chose many hymns as well as wanting to sing all the carols, and besides the Christmas story we read "The Other Wise Man." Then all of Sunday afternoon we kept open house, just a nice family party, winding up in the evening with a movie. It was a real Christmas, filled with the true Christmas spirit.







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